

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NORTH KERRY RAILTOUR - 3/4 JUNE 1972

Welcome aboard our first ever steam Railtour to operate entirely in Munster. No one under twenty is likely to remember travelling by steam train in this area, so your experience today is calculated to be a fairly historic one.

The engine hauling the train is known as J15 No.186, which first saw the light in 1879 (though of course she's a bit of an Irishman's axe). For example, the RPSI have themselves fitted new buffers and various other less obvious parts - not counting what CIÉ had done before they presented her to us in 1965. Though she herself was not often, if at all, to be seen in Limerick or Tralee in her heyday, plenty of her sisters were, and the enginemmen thought very highly of them. As the tender which came with her was small as well as leaky, we purchased a larger one from CIÉ which has greatly increased her range (i.e. between water stops). Since 1966 she has travelled some 2,500 miles on trips such as the present one.

Coal is a problem, but supplies have been arranged through the kind co-operation of Messrs Tedcastle, McCormick of Dock Street, Limerick.

Our best thanks also go to the many officials and workers of all grades in CIÉ who have helped in organising this complex operation. Incidentally, to minimize interference with the footplate staff, you are requested to REFRAIN FROM ASKING FOR FOOTPLATE RIDES.

A unique feature of RPSI tours is the running of lineside buses enabling photography, etc., of the train in motion - in selected scenic locations. In the present case, bus passengers, if they look sharp, have four such vantage points: near the top of Barnagh Bank; at Barnagh Station; between there and Templeglantan; and at Abbeyfeale Station (see map).

Half-way along the train you'll find a 'shop' selling "steam" souvenirs, photographs, books and magazines. Your support will help us run further tours. You'll also find details there of RPSI membership.

On the train also is a CIÉ Snack Car, serving sandwiches, biscuits, tea, soft and alcoholic beverages.

Evening Meal: The Mount Brandon Hotel have requested that you be ready to start Dinner at 21:00. This is because of staffing arrangements and is therefore important.

If you've been on steam railtours before (and even if you haven't) your suggestions for improvement will be very welcome. For example, since 1968 we have been the only organisation in these islands to operate steam trips over "proper" Railways, but this position will be challenged next weekend when the present ban on steam in Britain will be partially relaxed. In your opinion, can our unique facilities balance the attractions of BR steam? We can offer (in addition to lineside buses) variety of routes, runpasts and relatively small numbers of participants. Admittedly we have relied, entirely on 186 since September 1970, but expect to have ex-NCC 2-6-4T No.4 running later this year, followed by ex-GNR 4-4-0 No.171 "Slieve Gullion", giving 186 a well-earned if temporary, rest - temporary, since she will again have to be used if we travel over light-axle-load lines, like those traversed today.

Mr J. Friel, Publicity Officer, would like to have your views - or, preferably, jot them down here and hand this sheet to Mr A.C. Robb.

